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GREET THE NEW YEAR WITH HEALTHIER CHOICES



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Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. — With the New Year upon us, Okaloosa County residents will be deciding what resolutions they want to focus on accomplishing in 2016. The Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) wants residents to think of ways to make themselves and their families healthier this upcoming year.

"The start of a new year is always a good time to start making healthier choices," states Dr. Karen A. Chapman, Director of DOH-Okaloosa. "Making small steps now can prevent chronic disease such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer later in life."

The World's New Top Cause of Death: Our Diets

The biggest cause of premature death today is not in the air or water—it is on the dinner table. What we eat strongly relates to our overall health. 65 percent of adults are at an unhealthy weight. 1 out of every 3 children are now considered overweight or obese. Following portion sizes and eating balanced meals rich with fruits and vegetables are easy ways to focus on healthier eating this New Year.

Being Healthier is as Easy as 5210

5210 is an easy way to make sure you are making healthier choices daily.

- Eat **five** or more fruits and vegetables every day.
- Limit recreational screen (TV, computer, etc.) time to **two** hours or less each day.
- Be physically active at least **one** hour every day.
- Cut back on sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Eliminate use of and exposure to tobacco and nicotine products.

The potential benefits associated with eating a diet rich in colorful fruits and vegetables stack up quickly to reduce your risk of certain chronic diseases. Another easy way to be healthier is substituting water for sugar-sweetened beverages that are full of calories. Using resources such as www.ChooseMyPlate.gov can help guide you and your family on a path of healthy eat.

Limit Screen Time and Add Physical Fitness

The lack of physical activity, poor nutrition and increased media consumption contribute to emerging health issues. It is important to limit recreational screen time to two hours or less a day. Fill in the extra time doing something that will get you physically active. Everyone can gain the health benefits of physical activity regardless of ethnicity, shape or size. If being physically active is something new to you and your family, start slow and gradually increase your level of activity. Benefits of being physically active include reducing risk of heart disease, diabetes, some cancers, strengthening bones and muscles, improving mental health and improving the ability to do daily activities and prevent falls.

Tobacco Use is the Leading Preventable Cause of Death in U.S.

More than 16 million Americans are living with a disease caused by smoking. There are plenty of reasons to quit smoking. The average pack-a-day smoker in Florida can save more than \$2,000 for the 2016 holiday season if they quit smoking on New Year's Day. Not to mention, quitting smoking can add up to 10 years to life expectancy. The health benefits of quitting smoking begin almost immediately after the last cigarette and continue for years if they quit for good.

Tobacco Free Florida provides free and easy resources for the smokers to access.

- CALL: Call Tobacco Free Florida at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW to speak with a Quit Coach® who will help you assess your addiction and help you create a personalized quit plan.
- CLICK: Tobacco Free Florida's online cessation tool can be accessed at www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/webcoach.
- COME IN: In person help is available with the help of West Florida Area Health Education Center (AHEC) at 850-398-6965 or by visiting 1455 South Ferdon Blvd., Suite B-1, Crestview, Florida 32536.

For more information, please visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com.

It is important to consult with your healthcare provider before making lifestyle changes—especially if you are an older adult or have underlying health issues.

For more information about how to live a healthier life, visit www.HealthyOkaloosa.com.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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